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MANILA FOR ECON
STATE FOR OES/OMC DAVID HOGAN

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SENSITIVE

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TAGS: [SENV](#) [EFIS](#) [PHSA](#) [BE](#)

SUBJECT: BELGIUM: CMS SHARKS MOU--RESPONSE TO U.S. POSITION ON MOU
TO NEGOTIATE AN INSTRUMENT FOR GLOBAL SHARK CONSERVATION AND
MANAGEMENT

REF: STATE 10014

¶1. (U) Economic officers shared reftel points February 5 with Mr. Paulus Tak at the Belgian Federal Public Service Department of Health, Food Chain Safety and Environment, the GOB's maritime biodiversity expert who usually attends the Convention on Migratory Species (CMS) meetings. Tak will not be in Manila, where Belgium will not have anyone in attendance. Belgium has passed its positions to the representative of the EU presidency for the Manila meetings).

¶2. (SBU) Tak said Belgium, as part of the European Union, would coordinate the final common European Union (EU) position in Manila among other EU countries. Speaking informally, he said Belgium was supportive of the U.S. proposal but stressed that the EU's opinion was not yet decided. He strongly suggested the U.S. delegation raise its points with the "very able" UK delegation to the Manila meeting. Tak thought that the best chances for success for the U.S. position would be to gain wide 'membership' in the MOU, and mentioned the need to engage especially with fishing states, above all Asian ones. He added that initially it would be in the USG's best interest to include only a short list of shark species (what he referred to as a 'limited annex'), with a mechanism to expand the annex once the MOU was underway. He believed that naming too many species would increase the risk that countries might push for a formal CMS approval mechanism. He mentioned the Australian proposal (which he said included three key species) as one possibility.

¶3. (SBU) Tak was less sure the conservation and management plan ('Annex 2') could be concluded in Manila. Finally, he mentioned that the draft text of the MOU reads that the CMS Secretariat or a national institution could assume leadership over this MOU. He suggested that given that the U.S. had 'stepped forward strongly' on sharks in the last two years, the USG might wish to consider taking the lead. The EU was too divided, he opined, and the CMS Secretariat too weak. Even if a MOU were to be signed in Manila, Tak thought that it could only be as strong as the institution behind it, which requires a U.S. role

GUTMAN